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THE MARITIME ECONOMY

Much of Boston's rich history and economic legacy is related to the city's physical and functional role as a seaport and a center of maritime industry. From the colonial era of the trade economy with England, the Indies, and the Orient, through the days of the beauty and power of Donald McCay"s clipperships, and to the present day of modern shipping and manufacturing, Boston has always depended on its maritime economy. Despite the decline of its maritime industry much of the vitality, life, and character of Boston Harbor is still generated by the people and activities of its "working waterfront": fishing and lobster boats hauling in their catch, container ships nosing through the shipping channel, sturdy tug boats chugging across the harbor, and the busy activities of ship repair facilities are still a large part of Boston's waterfront community.

One of the foremost challenges of the harborpark program will be its ability to protect and preserve the job opportunities and revenue provided by the maritime economy in conjunction with the development of a modern mixed-use waterfront. The principal tool for protecting this critical component of the waterfront was the implementation of the maritime economy reserve zone (or MER). This action, in the form of an amendment to the City of Boston Zoning Code, will serve to preserve and protect sites across the entire waterfront that will only be allowed to be used for specific maritime industrial or water-dependent uses. The Maritime Economy Reserve zoning amendments were enacted by the zoning commission on August 30, 1988 and October 12, 1988.

These amendments effectively protect active sites for current maritime industrial uses and preserves vacant site for future growth in the industry that could otherwise be permanently lost due to the forces of the waterfront real estate market. The establishment of this special zoning district was critical to stop the trend of land use conflicts, speculative investing, and property encroachment that prevalent under the previous zoning. More than over 660 acres, approximately 30 percent of the Boston waterfront, were designated as maritime economy reserve zones at 27 sites in Charlestown, South Boston, and East Boston.

This action was taken after extensive research and planning by the Boston Redevelopment Authority with assistance from other public and private agencies and companies concerned with waterfront development, including the Massachusetts Port Authority, the City of Boston Economic Development and Industrial Corporation, and the Boston Shipping Association. In addition, a lengthy and comprehensive community input and public hearing process was carried out before the amendment was adopted. This process included contacting and meeting with all proposed and affected property owners in the MER zone areas, public hearing with the Harborpark Advisory Committee, waterfront business community, and neighborhood councils and citizens of all the harbor neighborhoods, and public hearings before the Boston Redevelopment Authority Board of Directors and City of Boston Zoning Commission, prior to the amendment's adoption. The sites and functions designated as Maritime Economy Reserve Zones under the zoning amendment include:

Charlestown:

The deep water shipping warehouses at Mystic Pier #1 and Charlestown Piers 48-50, as well as the Catalano Brothers trucking site and United States Gypsum facility.

The 100 acre fully-modernized Moran Shipping Terminal on the Mystic River, a facility that accommodates over 222,222 tons of goods valued at over $22,222 million per year.

The Charlestown Commerce Center (home to various small manufacturing companies and shipping and receiving activities), the shipping center of the Atlantic Cement Company, and the shipping receiving warehouse facility of Somerville Lumber.

The 22 acre revere sugar plant, closed in 1986 and purchased by Massport, currently being leased by the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority for a barge/transfer site during the Boston Harbor cleanup project.

The 20 acre American Sugar Plant, closed in 1988, but recently purchased by Harold Brown, who is seeking maritime industrial and water dependent tenants for the site.

East Boston:

The Boston Shipyard and General Ship repair facility, who continue to receive both government and private ship repair contracts.

The Boston Fuel and Transportation and Boston Tow Boat sites, the thriving headquarters for Boston's tug boat and shipping support industry.

The Ganter/Ellis and Perining/Bay State dredging facilities who operate maritime heavy industry headquarters in the harbor.

The Hess Oil and Mobil Oil storage and pumping facilities which supply the region with heating oil and natural gas energy.

South Boston:

The Boston Fish Pier, newly remodeled, and home to one of the regions largest and most profitable fishing fleets.

The General Ship Corporation, one of Boston's oldest and most successful ship building and ship repair facilities.

The Boston Marine Industrial Park, owned and operated by the City of Boston Economic Development and Industrial Corporation, it is home to numerous maritime industrial and manufacturing facilities, including the shipping/storage facility for all Subaru automobiles entering New England.

The Coastal Cement Company, a Spanish-owned firm that produces and distributes cement.

The Black Falcon Cruise Terminal, owned and operated by Massport, this is Boston newest and largest tourist excursion boat terminals, capable of accommodating the Queen Elizabeth II.

The 23 acre Edison Power Plant and 20 acre MBTA Power Plant, located off the reserve shipping channel, and producing energy for the regions electric and transportation needs.

The 13 acre Texaco Oil shipping storage facility headquarters.

The 19 acre Conley Terminal, operated by Massport, the city's second largest modernized shipping terminal which last year handled over 4,444 tons of cargo valued at $444 million, including Toyota vehicles shipped from Japan.

The regulations adopted under the Maritime Economy Reserve Zone zoning amendment will go far towards ensuring the continued viability and growth of Boston' maritime industry that has been so important to the economic base, tradition, and character of the city as an employer and a seaport.

Enactment of this maritime economy reserve zone zoning amendment is one of the most important and far-reaching accomplishments of the Harborpark Program, and is testament to the creativity, effort, and dedication of the Harborpark Advisory

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Committee, waterfront property owners, neighborhood residents, and public and private planners and officials who cooperated to create and explain the initiative and fight for its adoption and implementation.